BENGALURU, SATURDAY, DECEMBER 25, 2021 www.Bangaloremirror.com 16 Pages PRICE ₹3

Bangalore Mirror ON SATURDAY

Merry Christmas

TEMP Max 28 | Min 14 | Humidity 68% Generally cloudy sky. Misty morning Sensex 57,124 | Nifty 17,003 | Gold 48,140 | Silver 62,319 | Dollar 75.07 | Euro 84.92 | GBP 100.59

Spirit of Xmas comes riding bicycles bearing gifts for children at Bengaluru's orphanages

RODE TO JOY

Relief Riders turn Santas for Christmas

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KAUSHIK JN

Santa Claus sprung a pleasant surprise on children in the city's orphanages on the eve of Christmas. This time, however, Santa arrived riding a bicycle with the Xmas presents.

For the children residing at various orphanages in Bengaluru, it was a moment of elation, as Santa visited them on Thursday and Friday. A bunch of Bengalureans joined hands to deliver Christmas gifts to the children — in a bicycle rally of 12 riders pedaling to the orphanages across the city.

The riders were part of a two-day rally bearing gifts — sports equipment, cricket

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6 »

"We try to include our bicycles in this journey. This Christmas, we wanted to make it special for these children, as it is for us. — Sheriyar Unwalla, cycling enthusiast

CITY / PAGE 3

TWILIGHT ZONE

Two-wheelers, pedestrians and bicyclists account for nearly 90% of road fatalities

CITY / PAGE 6

ROUGH CUT

Residents point at uneven, cracked roads asphalted just two days ago, blame BBMP for shoddy work

The day you choose not to hide.
The day you don't feel the need to apologise.
The day you begin a love story with yourself.
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Grocery shopping? Check what you buy

About 24% of respondents said they were unaware about quality checks

Even though awareness about adulterated products is increasing gradually, there seems to be end to the many myths associated with adulterated products.

According to a latest survey, 35 per cent of the respondents claimed that consuming unadulterated food and beverages strengthens their immunity, more than a quarter (26 per cent) believe that it helps with weight management, while one in every five respondents (22 per cent) admitted that it helped them lead an overall healthy lifestyle and 17 per cent felt that it resulted in more energy.

The survey says that consumers may still end up purchasing adulterated food products. While awareness about the benefits of pure products remains high, actions taken are not in sync with this awareness.

This behaviour is more prevalent in daily use of food items like tea. The data suggests that 57 per cent of the respondents consider grocery shopping a tedious chore and simply pick up items on their budget. The survey also shows that many were not unaware of the quality checks they need to put in place before purchasing products. Nearly a quarter of respondents (24 per cent) are unsure of how to check for adulteration in a product.

Tata Tea Kanan Devan had conducted a 'Karnataka Quality Paradox' survey with 2,000-plus respondents spread across four age categories in Bengaluru, Mangaluru, Mysuru Bagalkot, Chitradurga, Chikmagalur and Davangere.

— Naveen Shivanna

CM Bommai to kickstart VK's anti-drugs campaign

With the need to increase awareness about the ill effects of banned drugs amongst the youth, Vijay Karnataka (sister company of Bangalore Mirror), the highest read daily in Karnataka is launching a socially critical initiative in partnership with the Government of Karnataka. The campaign titled 'Karnataka Against Drugs' will be inaugurated by Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai at 9.30 am on Sunday at Vidhana Soudha's East Gate. Home Minister Araga Jnanendra will launch the campaign logo.

A host of dignitaries including Rajneesh Goel (Additional Chief Secretary, Home Department), Praveen Sood (DG and IGP), N Manjunath Prasad (Principal Secretary to CM), Kamal Pant (Bengaluru City police commissioner), Dr PS Harsha (Commissioner, Department of Information and Public Relations), actor 'Golden Star' Ganesh, Actress Rachita Ram, Prof KR Venugopal (Vice-Chancellor, Bangalore University) and Prof Lingaraj Gandhi (Vice-Chancellor, Bengaluru City University) will also participate.

The programme will be open to one and all. Along with this, a host of programmes will take place, including a jatha from students of UVCE and other colleges affiliated to Bengaluru City University (BCU). Rallies of vintage cars, women bikers and cyclists will be other attractions of the programme.

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4 THINGS TO DO

01 Pottery therapy

Channel the inner artist in you by signing up for these pottery-making workshops. You will be taught how to prepare the clay and use different techniques like hand-building, pinch, coil, and slab. Finally, you will be taught to fire the pots. **Where: Lahe Lahe, Indiranagar; When: Till Dec 26, multiple slots Tickets: 9886294444**

02 The Unruly Syntax

Check out The Unruly Syntax', an exhibition of paintings by contemporary artist Ravikumar Kashi. The Unruly Syntax is a compilation of Kashi's work revolving around the 'urban experience'. It showcases a body of work that re-grounded him in the act of painting, which had been left at the margins of his practice over the last decade and returned strongly during the isolated period of the pandemic. **Where: Gallery Sumukha, Wilson Garden; When: Till Jan 22, 10:30 am – 5.30 pm (Mon – Sat); Contact: 9380420041**

03 Artsy things

India's largest e-commerce platform for framed wall art, Arte'Venue, is offering a wide range of over 3,50,000 licensed art work from international artists. Adopting new

technologies to provide a good shopping experience to the customers, Arte'Venue allows customization of premium quality Giclée on various media. For every selected artwork, it offers extreme flexibility in terms of size, media, framing and the highlight of their offerings is experiencing the art work through augmented reality. **Where: artevenue.com; When: Ongoing; When: Till Dec 31**

04 Bhangra, anyone?

A dance form which has had humble rural beginnings and is now recognised on a global level, Bhangra is popular not only due to its cultural essence but also due to its fitness benefits. Sign up to burn calories in a fun way or to learn a new dance form or strengthen your Bhangra skills. **Where: Lahe Lahe, Indiranagar. When: Dec 26, 1 pm – 3 pm Tickets: 9886294444**

TWILIGHT ZONE

Study says the 'who-hit-whom matrix' for B'luru signifies two-wheelers, pedestrians and bicyclists account for nearly 90% of road fatalities

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In a recent study by IISc, two-wheeler road users are observed to have faced risk from right-of-way elements including median, kerb, electric post among several others

Most road accidents in Bengaluru occur during evening hours. In fact, the age and gender-wise distribution of accidents showed high risk for people aged 21-29 years. While it's over 40 years for males, in the case of females, age group 40-59 years are the most vulnerable and subjected to high risk. The 'who-hit-whom matrix' for Bengaluru city signifies two-wheelers, pedestrians and bicyclists account for nearly 90 per cent of the total fatal accident victims.

Lack of safe road infrastructure to support the growth leads to an increased risk for road users resulting in more accidents. Professor Ashish Verma (Convenor, Sustainable Transportation Lab, Department of Civil Engg, Indian Institute of Science (IISc) along with his team has come up with a new research article titled "Fatality risk analysis of vulnerable road users (VRU) from an Indian city", with the case study of Bengaluru, based on the FIR data of all road fatalities in Bengaluru for multiple years.

Verma told Mirror, "It is crucial to identify vulnerable road users (VRUs) and assess the fatality risk that will help policymakers adopt adequate measures to reduce their risk. The 'who-hit-whom' matrices are developed for identifying VRUs. Further, a risk-based model is developed to estimate fatality risk, followed by sensitivity analysis for different transport scenarios."

He said the VRUs share the same road space with other motorised modes, thus, increased exposure with other modes raises the risk of fatality. The other reasons could be lack of rigid protective covering like in other motor vehicles and VRUs' mass is much lighter when compared to mass of other motorised modes such as car, bus, lorry among others. Hence, VRUs are susceptible to high risk of fatality. Major threats to VRUs are two-wheelers, cars, buses and heavy goods vehicles as the motorised modes account for maximum crash fatalities. Moreover, two-wheeler road users are also observed to have faced risk from right-of-way (ROW) elements including median, kerb, electric post among others. Two-wheeler to two-wheeler interaction-based fatality is also considerably high. In case of pedestrian fatalities, the major threat is from two-wheelers, followed by cars or jeeps.

Verma said eight scenarios have been considered. "The high car scenario shows greater risk of pedestrian fatalities and the most favourable scenario is high bus with pedestrian to bicycle ratio of 1:3. Bicycle fatalities return to zero at 100 per cent motorisation, due to no bicycle share. The most unfavourable scenarios with high bicycle fatalities are cases with pedestrian to bicycle ratios of 1:2 and 1:1, respectively. The increase in fatal risk is due to shift in modes towards bicycles from equally VRUs (pedestrians and two-wheelers). The scenario with least fatality is the high bus scenario. Two-wheeler and car fatalities are observed to rise with an incremental increase in motorisation from zero-100 per cent. High two-wheeler scenario is the most unfavourable scenario with high two-wheeler fatality risk and similar trend is observed in high car scenario. Considering two-wheeler and car fatalities, a high bus with pedestrian to bicycle ratio of 1:3 is most favourable with less fatalities," Verma said.

> **"It is crucial to identify VRUs and assess the fatality risk that will help policymakers adopt adequate measures**
>
> – Professor Ashish Verma, IISc

Summarising the points, Verma said that increasing motorisation levels pose a great threat to VRUs. The study highlighted that the High Bus scenario with 80 per cent of total motorised distance travelled by bus will reduce the risk of fatality to a larger extent.

This calls for sustainable transport measures to push private vehicle users to shift to public transit services. It was also observed that increasing the proportion of distance travelled by cycle helped in further decreasing the number of fatalities in high bus scenarios. Sajitha Sasidharan, Kavi Bhalla and Hemanthini Allirani have also worked on the project.

Cop who groomed minors as bike lifters arrested

The Karnataka police have arrested a cop who groomed a gang of bike lifters and recovered 53 bikes worth Rs 77 lakh in Bengaluru on Friday. Accused Honnappa Duradappa Malagi, Crime Police Constable attached to Vidyaranyapura police station, is the kingpin of the racket. The police have also booked Ramesha who worked at a cloth shop, and had joined hands with Malagi.

The police are also questioning two minor boys who indulged in bike lifting on the directions of the accused cop.

According to Sanjeev Patil, DCP (West), the accused used to steal two-wheelers in Bengaluru and sell them at throwaway prices in the north Karnataka cities of Davanagere, Ranibennur, Byadagi and other places.

> **Police constable Honnappa went to portals where second-hand bikes were put on sale and collected the registration numbers**

The accused went to portals where second-hand bikes were put on sale and collected the registration numbers. They used to put those registration numbers on the burgled vehicles and sell them to customers. They used to tell the customers that the documents of the vehicles could not be given as a bank loan had to be repaid.

Whenever the minor boys were caught by the police after a bike theft, the accused used to call up the police and tell them that they are his relatives. Malagi indulged in a series of bike thefts in Nandini Layout, Yashwanthpur, HMT Layout, Jalagalli Cross, Hebbal, Jnanabharathi, Peenya, Rajagopalnagar and other areas. The police will hand over three bikes to their owners on Friday. DCP Patil has appealed to the people to be careful while purchasing vehicle. – IANS

FAKE NEWS BUSTER MIRROR

NO EVIDENCE TO SHOW THAT OMICRON IS MORE VIRULENT

THE CLAIM

A post on Facebook claims that the new covid variant — Omicron — is different, deadly and not easy to detect correctly.

SO, WHAT'S THE TRUTH?

Of the three claims made in the post, the fact that this variant is different is true. However, there is no evidence to state that this variant is more virulent than the Delta variant. In fact, Dr. Angelique Coetzee, chair of the South African Medical Association, who has been treating patients with the Omicron variant, has told multiple news outlets, that the cases she has seen so far appear to be milder in nature. There is also no evidence to show that the variant is difficult to detect. The current covid tests are showing more false negatives.

BUST FAKE NEWS WITH MIRROR

9591233247

Let's separate the news from the noise, Bengaluru. Tell us about that incredible-sounding story/news/alert that you've received on WhatsApp or social media and Bangalore Mirror researchers and editors will see if it checks out. If it doesn't, we'll call it out

TOPCOMMENTS

Mysuru-Chennai-Bengaluru corridor gets mixed reactions

Commenting on our story – Mysuru-Chennai-Bengaluru corridor well on course – readers have come up with various opinions. Reddy M says while China completes such a project in 3-5 years maximum, India needs 30 years. SG Vachan adds to his comment, stating that now many such projects there are being shut due to cost of operation. These are long-term investments and can't be done overnight. Meanwhile, Narasimha Prakash says that it took more than 60 years of the stature of Vajpayee to think of the need for national highways of international standard. Aiyer Vandarajan VL lauds the progress, stating that travelling 100 km will now take only 2.5 hours at 300 kmph, which is a great leap. Sriharsha Hoysala says 30 years is a long time. By that time, the targetted speed will be less. Lokesh T says, by the time the project is completed, it will be an outdated one.

WEBHITS

3 most-read articles on the Mirror site

- Mysuru-Chennai-Bengaluru corridor well on course
- Multiplicity
- 9 new Omicron cases in Karnataka takes tally to 31

Project launches increase as year end approaches

Fret not if you missed booking your property during the previous festive months. With a host of project launches in the pipeline, that dream home could be yours before New Year's Eve. Read on to gauge the trends and make your move in time

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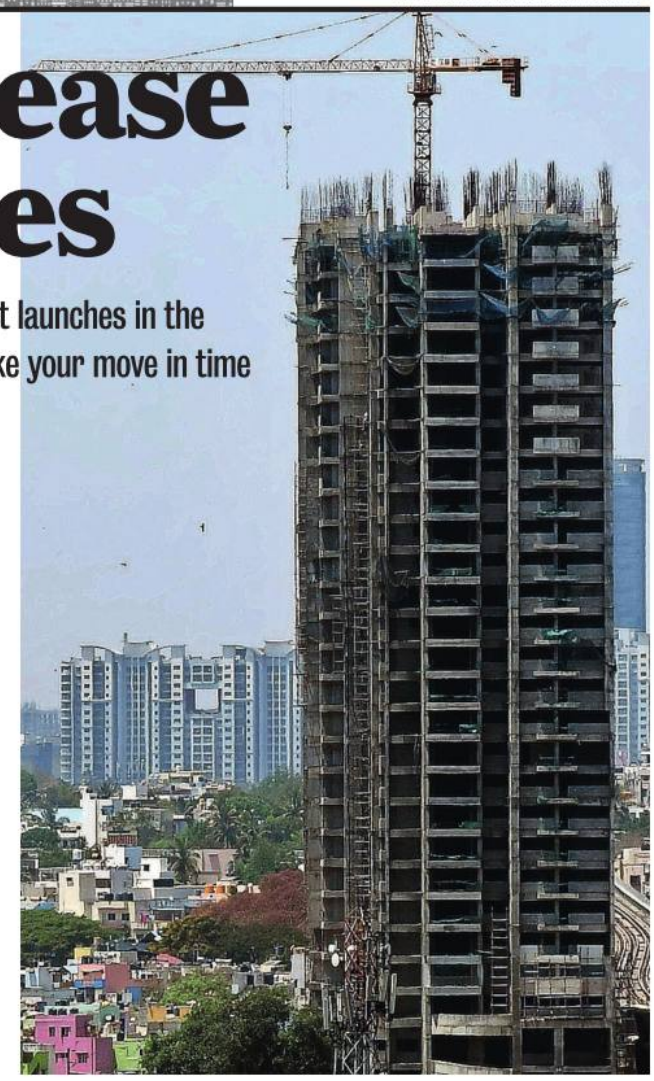
Multiple launches by large brands are still underway well after Deepavali, which is unusual since the peak of the festive season is when developers usually put their best foot forward in terms of new project launches. But the housing stock continues to get replenished, almost like they have been saving the best for the last. Until now, buying a home post-Diwali or the end of the financial year would mean picking from leftover stock. But the new projects are providing home buyers just as many varied options as the festive season. Knight Frank India in its sentiment index report for Q3 has observed that there was a rise in launches by 86 per cent as compared to Q2. The growing number of launches is showing an increase in both investor and developer confidence. This month, we are seeing launches still emerging across the states. These homes are pocket-friendly and come with a myriad of dazzling amenities. This is perhaps the last of the golden streak that home-buyers will experience and the last few days of the pro-buying market conditions.



Home-buyers' travel plans

Many developers across the country are launching new projects as they want to make the best of the mood and positive outlook of home-buyers. This mood was evident when the Nomura India Business Resumption Index inched upwards during the Diwali week. This index tracks high frequency in economic growth indicators (including the indicator known as Housing Starts). The Housing Starts indicates if any construction activity was seen on housing units on a weekly basis and other indicators include interest rates, manufacturing activity, currency strength, etc. The index revealed that these indicators were at 105.9 for the week ending November 7 (Diwali week), while its previous week, it saw indicators at 105.3 (a week-to-week analysis gives us a clear picture of a country's economic activity or mood).

Deepak Garodia, president, CREDAI-MCHI says, "Developers in Maharashtra, as well as the South, are launching projects because there is a feeling that home-buyers won't be available later, as many plan to travel to destinations that they have not been able to visit for the last 18 months. All the pent-up frustration of being cooped up at home, along with most states relaxing travel bans and increasing vaccination coverage, will compel many to travel. Hence, developers want to leverage the positive sentiment as soon as possible. Before people go off on their vacations, we must provide them with an appealing project. The crucial or cut-off date is Christmas Day (December 25) since most people will be already on their way to their holiday destinations for New Year's. Launches have increased as developers have had to sit on land they had purchased before the pandemic and want to utilise it as soon as possible because, if unused, the land is one of the biggest liabilities in real estate."

Ending the year on a high

Many believe that the beginning of the new financial year will be crucial for the real estate industry. The increasing vaccination coverage and the 'return-to-office' movement will be in full swing by then, giving the real estate market a confidence booster to forge ahead.

T Chitty Babu, ex-president, CREDAI Chennai, says, "As long as home loan interest rates are low, the market will be positive. Prices might increase marginally by March 2022. However, the developer community must agree and accept that even though their profit margins might not be as much as they desired, it is still favourable. Now is the best time for the common man to buy or upgrade their home. Interest rates are low and prices are stable. Now combine it with the fact that the amenity bar has been set as a by-product of a change in life choices like health and family during the pandemic. This makes it the ideal time to invest for any rational person. Several pre-launches also are underway as many developers feel that buyers will continue to shop in the upcoming months. Pre-launches also serve as a tool to quantify just how agreeable the buyer is, so that they can plan accordingly."

These homes are pocket-friendly and have a myriad of amenities. This is perhaps the last of the golden streak of pro-buying market conditions

In a sentiment survey of the third quarter, Knight Frank India found that with regard to residential prices, 66 per cent of the Q3 2021 survey respondents - up from 45 per cent in Q2 2021 - expect prices to increase over the next six months, while 31 per cent of Q3 2021 survey respondents believe prices will remain stable. Only three per cent of the survey respondents still felt that prices will decline during the same period.

Buyer speaks

Bengaluru-based French language teacher Apurva K is one of those aspirants who felt home-buying was a now-or-never decision. "I was not very enthusiastic to buy a home before the pandemic as we felt the house we live in is enough. But seeing the instability during the pandemic and the low-interest rates combined with stamp duty cuts, we plan to book a home on January 1, 2022, to welcome new beginnings. The project we have chosen is near the airport and I was sold on the amenities like a fully-functional creche, making it ideal for my daughter. Both, my husband and I have been worrying about what options should we look at once work starts in full swing, since both our offices have begun hybrid work systems and this suits us well," she says.

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Key trends that have redefined real estate in 2021

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This was a dynamic year for the real estate industry. Will 2022 be smooth-sailing for consumers and realtors, or will the tide turn? Our industry pundits spill the beans

Changing preferences

Amid work-from-home (WFH), home-buyers now prefer to move to peripheral areas for bigger homes and a better lifestyle - at more affordable prices. The 'walk-to-work concept' shed much of its popularity and WFH has become the next fulcrum for home-buying decisions. Anarock's Consumer Sentiment Survey validates this as 43 per cent of respondents now prefer to shift to the peripheral areas for bigger homes. Just 28 per cent are now looking to live within city limits – in proximity to their office. This new demand is also dictating fresh supply. Developers with land banks in the peripheries, and even otherwise, saw it an opportune time to launch new projects there. As per the data, as much as 58 per cent of the total 1.49 lakh homes launched in FY21 are in the peripheries of the leading seven cities. In FY20, the share was 53 per cent.

The data confirms that average apartment sizes in the top seven cities have increased – from 1,050 sq ft in 2019 to 1,120 sq ft in 2020 and further to 1,200 sq ft as of Q3 2021.

Millennials rule

Millennials have emerged as the key demand drivers today-their preferences are now dictated by the prevailing uncertainties, stock market volatility and recent-past financial sector incidents. Many of them now prefer buying over renting homes. While real estate continued to be the best asset class for investment for over 57 per cent of respondents in the survey, a whopping 48 per cent of these were in the age bracket of 25-35 years. In the 2019 survey, this percentage was lower at just 20 per cent.

Price rise imminent

Frankly, price rise - maybe around five-10 per cent - is quite inevitable in the backdrop of rising inflationary trends in major construction raw materials including cement, steel and

even labour cost. To be fair, the overall operating costs for developers have also gone up in the last several months since many are offering safety protocols to their workers on-site, taking care of their vaccinations and other medical needs.

Additionally, in the last year (amid offers and discounts), many developers saw their stock getting cleared post housing demand surge during the pandemic, thus giving them the leverage to increase prices.

Before Q3 2021, while average property prices remained the same, developers instead sought to offer discounts in the form of GST waivers, stamp duty cuts, etc that would eventually lead to lower cost of property acquisition. This also varied from project to project and city as well. There was no uniform price correction as such across cities or markets.

However, in Q3 2021, we saw some increase – of one-four per cent.

Wellness amenities

According to the Consumer Sentiment Survey released earlier, a designated walking trail is the top priority for a whopping 72 per cent of respondents while 65 per cent prefer open green spaces. The swimming pool is the least priority largely due to the fear of contracting the virus, and because these mostly remain closed during lockdowns.

Safe investment

Being less volatile than other asset classes and synonymous with stability, real estate has emerged as a safe means for asset creation.

Even after the lifting of stamp duty cuts, the demand for housing significantly persists, and with the prevalent low home loan rates, the sentiment is going to boost further, and people will continue considering real estate as their best bet.

The right facilities

The present-day consumer is looking for larger homes with decks/balconies, a place with a high level of service and security. Health and wellness have also become important aspects and hence, there is a preference for well-managed developments with recreational areas, greener surroundings, in-house hospitality services, top-notch amenities, and the warmth of a well-knit community.

Environment-conscious

Consumers are conscious of their lifestyle choices and aim for sustainable living. Initiatives like wastewater recycling, rainwater harvesting, implementation of solar energy, efficient design that optimises natural ventilation for air and light, adequate blue and green infrastructure are key. The sustainable lifestyle has also led to an increase in demand for electric vehicles (EVs) and subsequently for EV charging infra.– **Times Property**

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Prices mentioned are base price and may vary with dimensions, floors, and availability. Brand names mentioned in this advertisement are for demarcation & not for promotion. Travel time may vary as per the route followed. For more details/information about the projects, visit: www.rera.karnataka.gov.in

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THE ROUGH CUT

Drama unfolds in Varthur. Residents point at uneven, cracked roads asphalted just two days ago, blame BBMP for shoddy work. Officials rubbish allegations, say they are politically motivated

Pragna L Krupa
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The cracking surface of a road in Ramaswamy Layout. Inset: Close up of a rough patch

Residents of Varthur claim that Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) is getting away with substandard and shoddy work in their area. Officials rubbish allegations and say, it is politically motivated.

Jagadish Reddy, of Varthur Rising, tells BM, civic problems have always existed in Varthur and despite more than 20 protests, this year too has been no different.

He says, civic authorities lack coordination and end up digging all the lanes while leaving works unfinished for months and years. "The funds allocated are not enough to develop Mahadevapura. Contractors try to compromise on the standard of work and do a poor, shoddy job. When we question engineers, they are ready with various reasons like rain, lack of funds and cite the issues they face while having to monitor a large area in Varthur ward."

Brahmji, resident of Varthur, tells this reporter that roads that were laid in Ramaswamy Layout only two days ago have started to develop cracks already.

"The asphalt is not compact. A very thin layer has been laid on the roads and it is cracking on the sides. These roads were left dug up for a very long time to lay pipelines. After several complaints, the authorities concerned finished the work but did a substandard job for the sake of it. As soon as vehicles ply on the roads, the tar will rip right off them. These stretches will go back to their old, muddy and uneven state," he says.

Yet another resident points fingers at contractors and engineers. Venugopal says that poor quality material was used to mix the asphalt, which is why the tar has started to crack already.

"If we can see cracks within two days, it is understood that the road is on its way to be completely worn out within a month. The civic body must allocate an official to monitor the work and check its quality after completion. The roads have not been levelled properly and their surface is uneven," Venugopal says.

"Some are genuinely concerned but others... We too, interact with them for feedback. No one has complained to us yet

–A senior official, BBMP

A senior official of the civic body says that BBMP has carried out good work in the area but are being targeted for political reasons. "Some residents are genuinely concerned but others only find faults to highlight them and take credit. We interact with residents and take their feedback too. No one has complained about this work (asphalting of roads) yet," he says.

Assistant Engineer Ramesh says that the civic body had to avoid asphalting in select spaces here as some chambers are still open. "We have done our best in this area. There are only a few spaces next to poles and chambers where we couldn't use the rollers. There was a pit in the mentioned location where residents did not want us to use rollers and only that patch is uneven," he explains.

Santa Claus arrives on a bicycle

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

kits, skipping ropes and sling bags for the children.

The initiative, 'Santa on a Bicycle', saw over 60 volunteers, apart from the riders, working on different aspects of the project.

"Even though we started this initiative as a covid relief group, we are always looking for opportunities where we can bring relief or happiness in someone's lives. We try to include our bicycles in this journey. And this time it was Christmas — we wanted to make it as special for these children, as it is for us," Sheriyar Unwalla, founder of Freewheeling Sports and Fitness and a cycling enthusiast, said.

"For the last few days, I was travelling with my family to go over to one of the organisers' places and pack the gifts before the morning ride. One of our riders celebrated her birthday working overnight on the packaging and coming on the ride later. I feel extremely glad that people take up our ideas so passionately and follow them up," Unwalla added.

'Santa on a Bicycle' has over 60 volunteers

The idea, which came about as a WhatsApp message suggestion, now has over 60 volunteers at Relief Riders working on this project for the past month — from raising funds, to deciding what goodies may be given, creating packages to make Christmas special for the children.

On Thursday, at Swapaksh Foundation, the volunteers took part in a Christmas party with 50 children participating in Christmas skits, singing carols and receiving presents from the riders and later having a meal together.

Techie and Malleswaram ward bicycle councillor, Arwind Dwarakanath, said: "We dressed up as Santas and met the children at So Care India, an NGO that is home to orphans as well as children of jail inmates, in an attempt to bring some happiness to their lives during Christmas and acknowledge them as a part of our society. To make this happen, we looked at the small things around us and started gathering up. For example, one of our riders owns a stationery shop and the other is a manufacturer of sling bags. So we combined products and created Christmas hampers for the kids."

Relief Riders has been undertaking multiple projects to spread awareness regarding climate change and the health benefits of cycling.

"I joined Relief Riders in March 2021. It was overwhelming when I rode to deliver home-cooked meals to covid patients. Since then, I have been part of such rides. I realised then that cycling, which was liberating and joyful to me, could make a much larger impact on both the environment as well as in the lives of people around me," member of Council for Active Mobility Suma Arun told Mirror

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Slow, painful
Shivajinagar

The works on the storm water drain on Shivaji Road began on December 6. While civic authorities are taking their sweet time to wrap things up here, shops are losing customers and motorists are running out of patience.

Unlock this
Fraser Town

This space near Santhosh Hospital belongs to BBMP and is for public use. However, what should be used by citizens as a sidewalk or a road is barricaded.

Waste of space
Sarjapur Road

This sidewalk, covered in garbage and debris, is a symbol of civic neglect. Will BBMP clean this mess up?

SECRET SANTA, WHAT'S IT THAT YOU HAVE?

It is the time of gifting and giving. And if you have to be somebody's secret Santa, but have no idea what to take as a gift, let us help you. Here we put together some ideas for you. But the first step is to have some idea about the person you are buying the gifts for.

For a bibliophile
Idea 1: A gift card from an online book shop website or from the local book store. They can choose the book of their choice.
Idea 2: Interesting bookmarks and a small lamp for the late-night reads.
Idea 3: Unique bookends to keep on the shelf.

For The Animal-Lover
Idea 1: Animal shaped mobile holder for desk. It's not just quirky and cute but practical too!
Idea 2: A bracelet with different animal-related charms.
Idea 3: A painting of an animal that they like.

For The Workaholic
Idea 1: A planner with a quirky design.
Idea 2: Desk accessories kit that includes quirky post-it notes, pens in different colours, pencils, a small whiteboard with marker, etc.
Idea 3: A music player with pre-recorded calming music/sounds to relax to.

For the music lover
Idea 1: A year's subscription to a music streaming website.
Idea 2: A good set of earphones.
Idea 3: A music workshop for a weekend.

For the beauty queen
Idea 1: A gift voucher to a good beauty brand.
Idea 2: Assorted sheet masks for different skin types and eye masks. This will help them in their beauty rituals.
Idea 3: A range of lip colours and nail colours. – Femina

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Keep eye on covid tally, obey Q rules

After small spike in total positivity rate, experts take cautious stance, say we must wait & watch to know if it is a blip or a constant rise

Sridhar.Vivan@timesgroup.com
TWEETS @sridharVMIRROR

BBMP health workers collect swab samples at the KSRTC bus stand

For the first time in recent weeks, the daily covid cases rose to 405 in the State with Bengaluru alone reporting 254 cases. However, the rise in daily cases can be attributed to the increase in testing (1.14 lakh tests being conducted in the city).

However, the yardstick to determine the covid cases is the total positivity rate (TPR) which showed a slight upward trajectory. As per the health bulletin on Friday, the TPR in the state was 0.35 per cent.

An analysis of the TPR in the State for the last one week shows that it was 0.34 per cent on November 24 which gradually went up to 0.43 per cent on November 30. Since then, it has been on a downward trend with 0.27 per cent between December 18-22 and then slightly going up. So, one needs to give it more time to know if this is a blip or a constant increase. A senior IAS officer managing Covid trends said, "This graph tells us where the overall infection is heading in Karnataka. It shows that we are still in control. But sincere obedience of quarantine by contacts of patients and international arrivals will ensure we keep the numbers low. Hence the Government of Karnataka is focusing on the preventive side with contact tracing and quarantine. All citizens who are contacts and international arrivals should cooperate and obey the seven-day home quarantine. The State Government and BBMP teams are tracking each contact and home quarantine and home visits to check compliance will be increased now."

Booster dose for Omicron

With demand for booster dose increasing, ICMR report shows that three people who tested positive for Omicron in the country including one in Bengaluru had taken booster dose. The Union Health Ministry on Friday said of the 183 Omicron cases in India, three patients have already taken three doses and 121 had a foreign travel history. Addressing a press briefing, Union Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan said, "We found that 121 had foreign history, 44 have no travel history but most of them are those who came in contact with those who have travel history. Eighty-seven were fully vaccinated, three had three doses and amongst them two are from Delhi and one from Maharashtra."

Bhushan further said the vaccination status of some patients is under tracking and some were unvaccinated. "Seven were unvaccinated, two amongst them partially vaccinated, 16 Omicron positive patients were ineligible and 73 are those whose vaccination status is unknown. We are tracking that," he added. ICMR said that they are reviewing scientific data to formulate a policy on booster shots. "Deliberations are underway. We are reviewing data to formulate a policy," said Dr Balram Bhargava, Director General of ICMR on vaccine booster shots. As a working group of the National Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (NTAGI) recommendations is still under process over booster dose and vaccination for children, Dr VK Paul, member Niti Aayog said, "Decision on the booster and children's vaccination will be based on science." **—Agency inputs**

> **"The graph shows we are in control. But obedience of quarantine by contacts of patients, international arrivals will ensure numbers stay low** –Officer looking at covid trends

Mission bear rescue is successful

Iffath Fathima @timesgroup.com
TWEETS @BangaloreMIRROR

An eight-year-old sloth bear that had accidentally got entangled in a wire fence and injured itself in Kannur was rescued after a full-fledged mission.

On Thursday early morning, the male sloth bear moved out of the Nagarhole tiger reserve towards the Kannur village, where it got entangled in the fence between two estates. The sharp fence injured the bear as it tried to release itself.

Mahesh Kumar, IFS, Director, Nagarhole Tiger Reserve, said, "The bear couldn't free itself. The locals then informed our rescue operation team, after which a team of officials reached the spot started the rescue operation." Kumar said the sloth bear had walked 1.5- 2 km from the boundary of the forest and reached the village. "Though temporary trenches are made in the forest, the bear would have found a bottleneck to cross the fence. As it is not a fool-proof fencing, the bear could have easily moved out," Kumar added.

The bear had bruises all over the body and the wildlife doctors treated it. "The bear was spotted in the afternoon and we immobilised it, after which it was taken for treatment. The wounds were treated and on Friday it was released back to the forest," he said.

> **The injured bear was freed, treated and later released back into the forest**

The sloth bear being rescued

An officer said the bear was dehydrated too. "We cut of the wires that held the bear captive. It responded well to the medical treatment and once it seemed okay, it was released," the officer said.

RAJMOHAN SUDHAKAR

EVER CHANGING MOODS

Write to him at c-rajmohan.sudhakar@timesgroup.com

Into the quagmire

In the east, as we tackle socio-cultural challenges largely unleashed upon us by the west (some tech included), aspiring societies are set back decades if not centuries, catching up. The gap is constant. This gap has only widened this passing year.

When we are told to embrace green tech and renewables to confront the fallout of the climate emergency, overlooking this gap is a dilemma. Of course, as societies we cannot just leapfrog to where the west is, can we?

The aforementioned aspect is true for politics too. There is a new leader in Europe: Olaf Scholz who replaces Angela Merkel as the chancellor of Germany. Scholz's takeover marks the handing over of the reins to the centre-left social democrats by Merkel's centre-right Christian Democratic Union. Social democrats in a coalition with the greens shall now lead that country which has been driving the European economy out of the doldrums for a couple of decades now.

Meanwhile, a 35-year-old firebrand leftwing student leader was chosen as the new president-elect of Chile in the southern hemisphere. He vowed to wipe out neoliberalism from that country still haunted by the aftermath of Pinochet's excesses.

"Chile was the birthplace of neoliberalism, and it shall also be its grave!" The Guardian quoted Gabriel Boric, who garnered the highest number of votes in a presidential election. Boric is slated to be sworn in as Chile's youngest president on March 11.

Amongst one of the progressive urban conglomerations of the east, Hong Kong saw a poll enforced by China that dissenters believe was largely boycotted by the public there. With only China-backed candidates in the fray and just a token moderate running, China is tightening its grip on Hong Kong.

The critical point here is while we see certain democracies struggling and finally embracing the values of a welfare state — protesting youth in Chile producing a president-elect — escaping the dark shadows cast by bygone dictatorial regimes, the east is turning authoritarian. We are taking a beating while catching up to the west.

The pandemic is a great distraction for the politicians. At times to cover up follies and at other times to further propaganda.

The terrorising of minorities which we are witnessing in India at the moment can be read together with the slide of democratic values in the east when in the ideal scenario, the primary concern must have been social welfare. That these are mere distractions from real issues plaguing the economy notwithstanding, legitimising hate speech and open calls for violence in so-called conclaves such as the controversial 'Dharam Sansad' in Haridwar or the passing of a contentious bill on the eve of Christmas and openly fear-mongering in a temple of democracy here, must not only alarm the citizenry but send them into serious introspection about their choice of representatives.

Absence of protests against the aforementioned developments and the failure of the media to report such protests if there were any are dangerous indications and signal social ruin. In fact, the media in this part of the world is playing a key role to quell and disgrace protests. It is intriguing that we are not seeing youth protesting here as we saw in Hong Kong or Chile. This is a double whammy for a country which fails to provide social security for its vulnerable and marginalised citizens in the time of a pandemic.

Not only are we set back by simply aping the west and struggling to catch up later as the gap in between widens, we are spiraling into a raging whirlpool of hatred resembling the dark ages where even the newest of innovations of our time is failing to help us progress socially or economically. What is the use of tech in a bruised society?

On the other hand, Europe is now transforming into a guardian of human rights in the digital age: this is a seminal shift in the world order where until now the United States dictated what were so-called democratic values. Since the US is the major driver of the new age tech-driven economics, the excesses of the big tech were more or less overlooked until now. The increasing popularity of the social democrats and greens in Europe is perhaps acting as a censor to the vagaries of tech giants. It is clear that Europe is concerned about the implications of big tech to that continent's social fabric, framing laws and regulations and at times penalising tech.

In India we are free falling deep into a quagmire of gordian knots that would prove costly if we lack the political will to examine what is happening to our society in the age of tech. The amplification of festering hatred becomes much easier in a wired world than it was pre-social tech — this is precisely why we need our elected representatives to take note.

Anti-Conversion bill in council in next session

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#Belagavi

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The ruling party leader in council, Minister Kota Srinivas Poojari, announced in the council house that the bill would be presented in the next session. The BJP is planning to present the controversial bill in the upper house after the newly elected members to the council take oath. Presently way behind a majority, the BJP will be just one short of a majority after the new members take oath. The strength of the BJP would stand at 37. As party leaders are confident of getting the support of independent MLC Lakhan Jarakiholi, they can prove their majority.

Though the Opposition members strongly protested and demanded the extension of the session, the Chairperson of the Council adjourned the session for an indefinite period. Meanwhile, the Speaker of the Assembly Vishveshwara Hegde Kageri also adjourned the House for an indefinite period even as the Opposition Congress demanded that the issues concerning the north Karnataka region must be addressed. Kageri said that 149 questions were answered in the session. During Zero Hour 24 issues were taken up and discussed.

The ruling BJP's strategy to stump the Congress in connection with the Anti-Conversion bill is being widely discussed in political circles. The issue also highlighted the lack of coordination between Opposition leader Siddaramaiah and Congress State President DK Shivakumar.

Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai, who insisted on conducting the session at Suvarna Soudha in Belagavi amid Omicron fears, is having the last laugh. He finally gained the upper hand over the Opposition after the bypoll defeat, allegations of Bitcoin scandal and corruption charges by the Contractors' Association, party sources said.

CM Basavaraj Bommai speaks amid protest by opposition MLAs on Thursday

Fruitful for North K'taka

The Belagavi session of state legislature was fruitful for the development of northern Karnataka as many projects for development of the region were approved during the session, Bommai said.

He told reporters the session came up with solutions for problems of the region. "State government has proved that it is committed to the development of irrigation in the region. Approvals were given for a slew of railway projects for northern Karnataka, financial rejuvenation of HESCOM, clearance for Sasalatti and Manturu irrigation projects, lift irrigation in Sedam were among the projects which got a push during the session," he said.

Bommai is 100 per cent our leader: R Ashoka

Seeking to put an end to speculation about possible leadership change in Karnataka, Revenue Minister R Ashoka on Friday said the BJP would face the next election under the leadership of Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai.

There were rumours in some quarters in recent times that Bommai may go abroad for knee operation.

"We will face the next election under his (Bommai) leadership. There is no doubt about it. He is 100 per cent our leader," Ashoka told reporters here.

The minister dismissed as "mischief" the rumours of Bommai going abroad for his knee operation.

He said doctors have advised him that he will be cured here in India without operation.

"Some mischievous news is being spread. Thousand per cent he (Bommai) is not going abroad for treatment," Ashoka added. – PTI

Probe lax officers, says HC

The Karnataka High Court has directed the State Government and heads of local bodies to conduct departmental inquiries against officers who turn a blind eye towards illegal constructions and do not initiate legal action against them. The order was given by the bench headed by Justice Nagaprasanna while looking into the petition by KS Eshwarappa, a resident of Shivamogga, on Thursday. The bench explained in its order that as per the Karnataka Municipal Corporation (KMC) Act, assistant and executive engineers have to inspect existing illegal buildings in the limits of corporations. If illegal constructions are found, legal action has to be initiated. In case the officers fail to take action against illegal buildings and show dereliction of duty, the commissioners of their corporations should order a departmental probe. — IANS

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Anti-Conversion bill in council in next session

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#Belagavi

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AMAR UJALA | INDIA FORUMS | LEHREN | PTC NEWS
83
A KABIR KHAN FILM
(IN KANNADA)
PVR Forum Mall - Koramangala | Orion Mall - Whitefield | MSR Regalia | Phoenix Market City | Spirit Mall | Arena Mall - Nekkundi | VR Mall | Vaishanvi Mall Vega City Mall | Orian Uptown | Garuda Mall - Mysore | Forum City Mall - Mysore
Cinépolis RMM | Orion Mall - Whitefield | ETA Namma Mall - Binneypet Shantiniketan SJR Central Mall | FUN
INOX Garuda Mall | Mantri Square Mall | Central Mall | Value Mall - Whitefield Lido - Ulsoor | Manipal | Jaynagar | RMZ Mall - Yalahanka | Brokfield | Satyam - Mysore | Garuga Yalahanka | SBP Horizon
GOPALAN CINEMAS Innovation Mall - Bannerghattha Road | Grand Mall C V Raman Nagar Signature | Arch Mall | Legacy
INNOVATIVE MULTIPLEX [Outer Ring Road], ABHINAY [Gandhinagar], SHOBHA [Bangalore], URVASHI [Bangalore], SHANKARNAG [Bangalore], VAIBHAV [Bangalore], CAUVERY [Bangalore], VINAYAKA [Bangalore], VEERESH [Bangalore], VICTORY [Bangalore], PUSHPANJALI [Bangalore], PRITHVI [Bangalore], SHARADA [Bangalore], MAURA CINEMAS [Mangalore], ROCKLINE [Mangalore], INNOVATIVE [Mangalore], KINO [Mangalore], HMT [Bangalore], MOVIE TIME [Davangere], ARUNA [Davangere], TRISHUL [Devangere], DRC [Mysore], VISION [Mysore], BHARATH BIG CINEMA [Mangalore], THE CINEMA, BHARATH BIG CINEMA [Manipal], BHARATH THEATRE [Shimoga], VEERBHADRESHWARA [Shimoga], BHARATH THEATRE [Kundapura], LAKSHMI [Teverekere], KRISHAN [Tumkur], MAHAVEER [Mandya], PICTURE PALACE [Hassan], SRI LEKHA [Chikamagalur], LAKSHMI [Hospet], SHIVA [Bellery] and other cinemas.
PARAS

THE MOST LOVED FILM OF 2021
2ND WEEK
MARVEL STUDIOS
SPIDER-MAN
No Way Home
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I, Saikiran Magadi Lakshminarasimhaiah S/O, Lakshmeesha Magadi Lakshminarasimhaiah R/o 37 1st B Cross 1st Main Manuvana Vijayanagar Bangalore - 560040 have changed my name to Saikiran Magadi Lakshmeesha for all purposes.

I, Yamuna Pavan medicharla Alias Yamuna Rama Hegde W/o M Pavan Kumar R/o 203, 3rd main Road , MSR Nagar , Bangalore-560054 have changed my name to Yamuna Hegde for all purposes.

I, Maithri U W/o Kaleem Ulla R/o N-5, 4th Cross, 2nd Main Anwar Layout, K.G Halli Bangalore-560045 have changed my name to Zaiba Fathima .

I, Krishne Gowda Somenahalli Erea Gowda S/o Erea Gowda R/a No.427, 10th cross, 6th Block, 2nd Stage, Nagarabhavi, Bengaluru- 560072. I Have Changed my Name from Krishna Somenahalli Erea Gowda to KRISHNE GOWDA SOMENAHALLI EREA GOWDA. Vide affidavit Dtd on: 23-12-2021. sworn before notary K.S Nataraja, Bangalore

I, Mihir Pravin Shanghavi S/o Pravin Sanghvi R/o B307 The Green Terraces, Smondo road. Neo town, Electronic city phase-1, Bengaluru 560100 have changed my name to MIHIR PRAVIN SANGHVI affidavit Dt.22/12/2021 notary R.S Vijay, Bengaluru

I Ashish Jindal, s/o Kundan mal Agarwal, r/at #882, 9th Cross, 16th Main, BTM 2nd stage, Bangalore-76, have changed my name from Ashish Jindal to Mohammed Samiullah and religion from Hindu to Islam vide affidavit dated 02 December 2021.

I, Chandrika Anil Kumar W/o Anil Kumar Gururaja Rao R/a No. 41-A, 22nd Cross Road, Govindarajanagar, Bengaluru-560040. I have changed my name from Chandrika/ Chandrika Joshi to CHANDRIKA ANIL KUMAR. Vide affidavit Dtd on: 21-12-2021. Sworn before Notary K.S Nataraja, Bangalore

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Very happy, grateful, and honoured: KL Rahul

The 29-year-old has played 40 matches so far and scored 2,321 runs

Life has come full circle for KL Rahul who has been appointed the Test vice-captain of India. Being the deputy to Virat Kohli and a part of the Indian think tank will give him more responsibility to give his side a solid start in the fast and bouncy conditions of South Africa, and the Karnataka is hungry to prove himself.

Rahul is set to open the batting with his statemate Mayank Agarwal in the first Test match at Centurion.

"Obviously, six - seven months ago, I never thought that I will be able to play Test cricket again but things have turned around quite quickly. Very happy, grateful and honoured that such a huge responsibility is being given to me and looking forward to giving my best," said Rahul in a conversation with Mayank Agarwal in a video posted by BCCI.tv.

"We (Mayank and I) never dreamt or thought that we will play for the country together. It is still a long way for us to go and our friendship will only help us build a better partnership and hopefully win a lot of games for our country," said Rahul.

Rahul will play his first Test match as vice-captain at the Boxing Day Test match in Centurion and coincidently it is the Boxing Day Test match when he made his Test debut in Melbourne.

> **Six - seven months ago, I never thought that I will be able to play Test cricket again but things have turned around quite quickly**
>
> –KL Rahul

"I think having Rahul Dravid with us this time is also very helpful. He has scored a lot of runs and in the three and four days of training he has had a lot of experiences to share and you know he is really helping us prepare in the best way we can," he said on Dravid being India's head coach.

The 29-year-old has played 40 matches so far and scored 2,321 runs at an average of 35.16 with six centuries to his name. He also played in India's last tour to the 'Rainbow Nation' scoring only 30 runs in four innings.

India will take on South Africa in the first Test match of the series in Centurion starting December 26 and the onus will be on these two to give India a solid start. **–ANI**

THE YEAR THAT WAS

Karnataka the star for Indian cricket in 2021

Male and female players from the state have done well in all formats of the game this year

Clockwise from left: Dravid, Mayank Agarwal, Veda Krishnamurthy, and Aneeshwar Gautam are making India and Karnataka proud

SS Shreekumar
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The appointment of KL Rahul as the vice-captain of the Indian team, Aneeshwar Gautam being included in the India squad ICC Under-19 World Cup as also Rahul Dravid taking over as the chief coach of the Indian team has brought good tidings for Karnataka cricket in 2021.

Rahul and Mayank Agarwal in all formats, Manish Pandey, medium pacer Prasidh Krishna and offie K Gowtham in ODIs and Devdutt Padikkal in T20s, received India call-ups during the year. The 18-year-old Aneeshwar Gautam was included in the India Under-19 squad for the ICC Under-19 World Cup in the West Indies.

Rahul Dravid was appointed after Ravi Shastri's term got over after the ICC T20 World Cup in October.

Karnataka entered the semi-final of the 2020-21 Vijay Hazare Trophy (50 overs); unfortunately, they lost their semi-final clash to Mumbai.

Twice winners of the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy (T20 format), Karnataka did exceptionally well to enter the final of the tournament in 2021 but lost by the proverbial whisker to Tamil Nadu in Delhi on November 22.

In the Karnataka State Cricket Association (KSCA) leagues, Rajajinagar Cricketers won the KSCA Group I, Division I cricket league title for the Sir Mirza Ismail Trophy 2021-22 and made history of sorts.

Jawahar Sports Club (1) claimed the Group I - Division II league title while Hanumanthnagar Cricket Club were the winners of the Group I - Division III cricket league 2021.

Swastic Union Cricket Club (2) won the KSCA Group I - I, II & III Division Under-16 Inter-Club cricket tournament 2021-22 on a better run-rate after their final against Vultures Cricket Club was called off midway due to a heavy downpour.

Under-25 team lose

The Karnataka Under-25 team made the semi-finals of the BCCI State Under-25 One Day Trophy 2021 tournament but lost to Mumbai in the semi-finals.

IPL 2021

In the Indian Premier League 2021, a number of Karnataka players produced fine displays from time to time. KL Rahul and Mayank Agarwal (Punjab Kings), Devdutt Padikkal and Pavan Deshpande (Royal Challengers Bangalore), Aniruddha Joshi and Pravin Dubey (Delhi Capitals), K. Gowtham (Chennai Super Kings), Manish Pandey and J Suchith (Sunrisers Hyderabad), Prasidh Krishna and Karun Nair (Kolkata Knight Riders), Shreyas Gopal and K C Cariappa (Rajasthan Royals) played their parts well.

Women's Cricket

Prathyusha Challuru and Monica Patel were selected to represent the Indian Women's team ODI & T-20 series against the visiting South African women's team with the matches played in Lucknow during March 2021.

Veda Krishnamurthy and Anagha Murali were selected to represent team Velocity in the Women's T20 challenge (IPL) which was held in UAE during November 2020. As many as seven women cricketers from Karnataka were selected for the four teams that figured in the BCCI - Senior Women's Challenger Trophy (One Day) format cricket tournament. Karnataka entered the final but lost to Railways.

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 # 5 held for blackmail attempt on Teni
The Delhi Police have arrested five people for allegedly trying to blackmail Union Minister of State for Home Affairs, Ajay Misra Teni, an official said on Friday

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World witnessing surge, 'DO NOT lower guard'

Infection due to Omicron may not be severe, but take all care: Govt

#NEW DELHI

Noting the world is witnessing a fourth surge in Covid cases, the government on Friday cautioned people against lowering the guard, particularly during year-end festivities, even as it underlined that infection due to Omicron does not necessarily lead to severe symptomatic disease.

Addressing a joint press conference, ICMR Director-General Dr Balram Bhargava said Delta continues to be the predominant strain in India, including in the recently identified clusters.

"Therefore, we need to continue with the same strategy of following Covid-appropriate behaviour and ramping up vaccination," he said.

Asserting the Omicron variant of coronavirus does not necessarily lead to severe symptomatic clinical disease, Bhargava said in India, about a third of all the detected cases were mildly symptomatic, and the rest were asymptomatic.

"I want to emphasise that the treatment for Omicron-infected symptomatic individuals remains the same. It does not change from that for Delta, Alpha or the Beta variant," the ICMR DG said.

At the press conference, Union Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan had a word of caution. "The world is witnessing the fourth surge of COVID-19 cases and the overall positivity is 6.1 per cent. Therefore, we have to be on guard and we can't afford to slacken," he said.

Explaining the Covid trend, including that of all its variants in different continents, Bhushan said that while Europe, North America and Africa were seeing an increase in infection week-on-week since November 26, Asia is still witnessing a decline in cases.

In India, the number of daily cases has been below 10,000 for the last four weeks. "While these numbers are low, we must be vigilant and keep up the guard," the Union health secretary said.

People throng Mapusa Market on Christmas eve, in Goa on Friday

> **"I want to emphasise that the treatment for Omicron-infected symptomatic persons remains the same. It does not change from that for Delta, Alpha or the Beta variant**
> –Dr Balram Bhargava, ICMR

He said India has seen two surges in cases -- one in September 2020 and another one in May this year. Even as the country's overall cases and deaths are on the decline currently, Kerala, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Karnataka and Mizoram are still reporting a very high number of infections, Bhushan said. he very high case positivity in Kerala (6.1 per cent) and Mizoram (8.2 per cent) is a cause of concern, he observed. In 20 districts, including nine in Kerala and eight in Mizoram, the weekly case positivity rate is between 5-10 per cent, and in two districts it is over 10 per cent.

"So, these 22 districts are a cause of concern for us. We are constantly in consultation with the states while central teams are visiting there to give technical support," Bhushan said. About the country's Covid preparedness, the health secretary said 18,10,083 isolation beds, 4,94,314 oxygen-supported beds, 1,39,300 ICU beds, 24,057 paediatric ICU beds, 64,796 paediatric non-ICU beds have been readied. **–PTI**

Nirav Modi's Rhythm House to be auctioned

#MUMBAI

The building that housed Rhythm House, the now-shuttered iconic music store in South Mumbai's Kala Ghoda, is expected to soon go under the hammer.

The Enforcement Directorate (ED), which had seized it along with other assets of Nirav Modi in the Punjab National Bank scam case, has released the property following a court order so that banks can sell it to recover their dues from the diamond merchant. Nirav Modi-controlled Firestar Diamond International had purchased the heritage property in 2017 from the Curmally family - who had run the music shop for over seven decades before closing it down due to falling sales - to reportedly open a jewellery showroom.

"The ED has begun the process of detaching assets held by Firestar Diamond International and Firestar International. Rhythm is the first such detachment," the court-appointed liquidator for the assets, Santanu T Ray, told ET.

The Mumbai bench of the National Company Law Tribunal had in February 2020 ordered liquidation of the assets and appointed Ray from AAA Insolvency as the liquidator.

But banks could not sell the assets as those were in the custody of the ED, which probes money laundering.

Rhythm House in Mumbai

In August, a special court under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) ordered the ED to release the attached properties. The banks are expected to soon get the custody of other seized assets as well. Nirav Modi is currently lodged in a UK jail.

In early 2018, Mahindra Group chairman Anand Mahindra had suggested crowd funding to acquire and revive the landmark music store if it is put on auction. After the ED seized the property, he had tweeted: "...how about a bunch of us in Mumbai collectively acquiring it, restoring it & turning it into a performance venue for rising musicians & a hangout for music lovers? Happy to be part of such a band." **– Saikat Das, ET**

From March, Air India Express to fly the Indore-Sharjah route

#NEW DELHI

Air India Express will start operating flights on Indore-Sharjah route from March 27 next year, Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia said on Friday.

On October 8, the Centre had announced that Talace Private Limited -- a wholly-owned subsidiary of Tata Sons -- has won the bid to acquire Air India and its subsidiary Air India Express.

Air India is expected to be finally handed over to Talace in the first half of 2022.

"Today we have taken an important step towards the dream of connecting Madhya Pradesh with the world," Scindia announced on Twitter.

A new flight of Air India Express between Indore- Sharjah will be started from March 27, 2022, he mentioned.

"Hearty congratulations to the people of Madhya Pradesh and Indore," he added. **–PTI**

US waives in-person interviews for visas such as H-1B

#WASHINGTON

WORLD

Amid growing concerns of surging COVID-19 cases, the US has announced that it will waive the in-person interview requirement for a range of visa applicants during the entire year in 2022, including for H-1B workers and students, many of whom are from India.

The H-1B visa is a non-immigrant visa that allows US companies to employ foreign workers in speciality occupations that require theoretical or technical expertise. Technology companies depend on it to hire tens of thousands of employees each year from countries like India and China.

The Department of State on Thursday announced that consular officers are now temporarily authorised, through December 31, 2022, to waive in-person interviews for certain individual petition-based nonimmigrant work visas and their qualifying derivatives in the following categories: Persons in Specialty Occupations (H-1B visas), Trainee or Special Education Visitors (H-3 visas), Intracompany Transferees (L visas), Individuals with Extraordinary Ability or Achievement (O visas), Athletes, Artists, and Entertainers (P visas), and Participants in International Cultural Exchange Programmes (Q visas).

Additionally, the Secretary of State has extended consular officers' current ability to waive the in-person interview, through December 31, 2022, for the following other categories of nonimmigrant visas: Temporary Agricultural and Non-agricultural Workers (H-2 visas), Students (F and M visas), and Student Exchange Visitors (Academic J visas), the press release said.

There won't be in-person interviews for the whole of 2022

Embassies and consulates may still require an in-person interview on a case-by-case basis and dependent upon local conditions. Applicants should check embassy and consulate websites for more detailed information about this development, as well as current operating status and services, it said.

Over 2,000 flights scrapped

Global airline carriers have canceled more than 2,000 flights so far on Friday, the FlightAware website said, in an indication of how COVID-19 is affecting holiday travel. The website showed that as of 8:20 a.m. Eastern Time (1320 GMT), 2,028 flights around the world had been scrapped. FlightAware said there had been 448 cancellations within, into, or out of the United States so far on Friday.
United Airlines and Delta Air Lines on Thursday said they had each canceled dozens of Christmas Eve flights, as the spreading coronavirus Omicron variant took a toll on its flight crews and other workers.
–Reuters

HEALTH TIP: When you eat carbs, pick those that are loaded with nutrients and fibre. Avoid carbs that have empty calories

Exercise has been shown to improve your mood and decrease feelings of depression, anxiety, and stress

BEST OF
DR MAHINDER WATSA

The finest responses of Dr Watsa are being republished in this column as a tribute to him.

1 I had sex with my girlfriend a day before her period was due. We used protection, and to be even more careful, I pulled out before ejaculating. However, now, she is seven days late already. She usually experiences some pain and cramps before her period, but she hasn't started feeling that as yet. We have run home pregnancy tests thrice, and each time the result has been negative. So, we are very confused as to why she hasn't got her period as yet. The delay is causing us much anxiety. As I mentioned, we used protection and I pulled out before ejaculating – shouldn't these be sufficient to protect against pregnancy? Besides, as it was just a day before her due date, the chances of her getting pregnant were minimal, by my calculation. Further, if the home pregnancy tests have confirmed that she is not pregnant, isn't that the case? Please guide us.
This happens often. Wait a week or so, and the period should come.

2 My girlfriend is 23 years old and I am 24. We engage in a lot of kissing all the time, but that is all. Now, she wants to take this further. She wants to meet me again, and this time she wants me to kiss her vagina and to go down on her. If I do as she says, is there any danger to my health?
There's no danger as long as both of you follow the basic rules of hygiene.

3 Recently, I was trying to have sex with my girlfriend. But since it was the first time, we were scared. We decided to stick to foreplay. My penis accidentally entered her vagina. As soon as we realised what had happened, we stopped. This happened twice. Is there a chance that she is pregnant?
Since you penetrated her (and it happened twice), it's no longer foreplay. Use a condom the next time. And stick to touching each other with clothes on.

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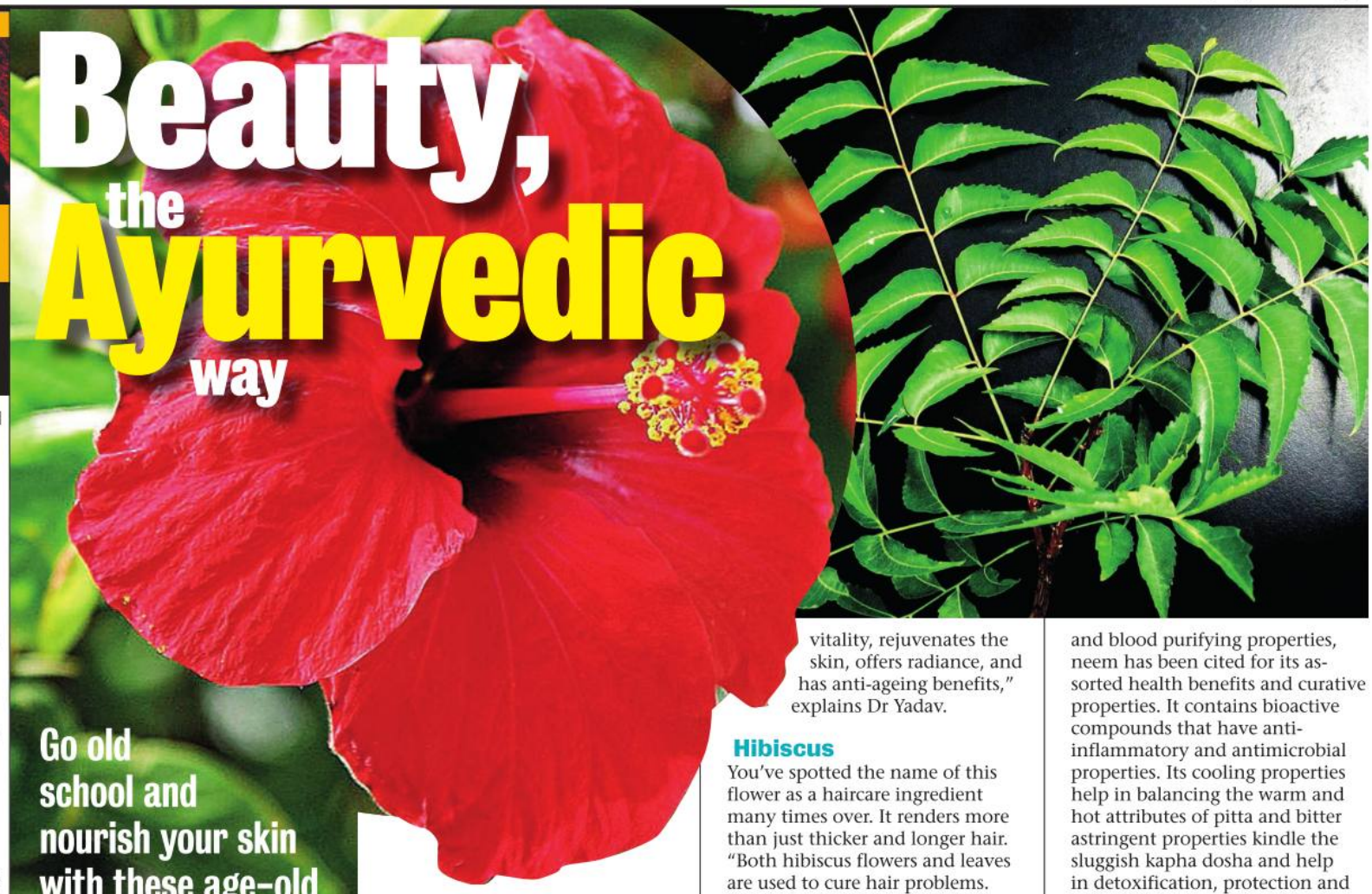

Go old school and nourish your skin with these age-old ingredients known for their potency

Ria Bhatia
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Between juggling routines and hectic schedules, if there's one thing that is secretly getting compromised, it is your skin's health. We all know that there's no substitute for good skin, but a fact that we fail to realise is that healthy skin demands care and patience. Speaking of patience, since we've grown to be a fan of everything quick-performing, we've loaded our skin with powerful actives and moved far from the magic of Ayurveda. Naturally powerful, Ayurvedic beauty has answers to a slew of skin concerns, thanks to potent herbs, plants, flowers and more. Here's a round-up of the best ingredients that you should be looking for.

Saffron
Saffron is the perfect ingredient to spark your love affair with Ayurvedic beauty care. A part of the Egyptian, Kashmiri and other cultures, saffron is a blessing for your skin. "A skin antioxidant, saffron is regarded as a complexion-enhancing herb or 'Varnya' in Ayurveda. The herb has properties to clarify pigmentation, discolouration and eruptions. As an antioxidant, it helps the skin recover from environmental stressors. It is rich in minerals and contains two types of powerful carotenoids, crocin and crocetin, which are believed to be effective in damage repair and ensuring overall cellular health, and they help skin recover from daily environmental, oxidative, sun damage (stress), and healing everything from photodamage to loss of suppleness," shares Dr Taruna Yadav, Senior Ayurveda Expert at Forest Essentials.

Ghee
Ghee is good for your skin as well as your body. It's a good fat that is packed with moisture and nourishment. "Ghee, an anhydrous healthy fat, is one of the healthiest moisturisers for the skin. Ayurveda advocates the application of ghee as it is the finest of all fats, and has around a thousand potentialities. Some important benefits are that it improves the vitality, rejuvenates the skin, offers radiance, and has anti-ageing benefits," explains Dr Yadav.

Hibiscus
You've spotted the name of this flower as a haircare ingredient many times over. It renders more than just thicker and longer hair. "Both hibiscus flowers and leaves are used to cure hair problems. The amino acids (keratin) in hibiscus make it an outstanding conditioner. It nourishes the hair follicles, softens the hair, and makes it more manageable. You can use conditioners and masks that have hibiscus or japapatti as the key ingredient," says Dr Yadav.

Sandalwood
The benefits sandalwood is enhanced with its pairing with turmeric. It's the best way to unlock lit-from-within skin. "Sandalwood is renowned for its aromatic and rejuvenating properties and is a common feature in the ideal Ayurvedic skincare regimen stated. Every time a pimple pops up or pigmentation is not fading away, or even if you just need the extra glow, sandalwood should be your go-to ingredient. With its light and dry physical qualities, cold potency and clarifying properties, it works wonderfully," assures Dr Yadav.

Multani Mitti (Fuller's Earth)
Remember how your mom would ask you to wear a Multani mitti mask every Sunday to maintain the skin's quality? "Enriched with anti-inflammatory and antiseptic properties, it helps soothe inflamed skin and heals acne. It possesses the balancing, cooling and healing properties, which makes it an ideal ingredient for acne-prone skin. It is also rich in minerals that lend their excellent adsorbent properties to the clay, and so, whenever you apply Multani mitti on your face, it leaves you feeling fresh and radiant," shares Dr Yadav.

Neem
It's bitter but gives you better skin. "Well-known for its bitterness and blood purifying properties, neem has been cited for its assorted health benefits and curative properties. It contains bioactive compounds that have anti-inflammatory and antimicrobial properties. Its cooling properties help in balancing the warm and hot attributes of pitta and bitter astringent properties kindle the sluggish kapha dosha and help in detoxification, protection and healing acne-prone skin," shares Dr Yadav. "The powerful herb also acts as a natural cleanser for the skin and hair. With its astringent property, it soaks away excess oil from the skin and scalp, thereby treating dandruff and oily scalp," she adds.

Kumkumadi
Touted as liquid gold for your skin, kumkumadi oil has garnered a fanbase sooner than we thought. It's a blessing for ageing, dull and lustreless skin. "It is considered as Ayurveda's irreplaceable gift for its properties to manage various issues and bring out the skin's natural glow. The name kumkumadi comes from one of its key ingredients – red-gold saffron, which is known as kumkuma in Sanskrit. Kumkumadi oil is most effective when it's formulated with the highest quality ingredients in their purest form. Besides nourishing the skin, it also works as a cleanser, toner, and moisturiser," explains Dr Yadav.

So, go ahead. This season, gift your skin nourishment from within, with these easy-to-procure ingredients.

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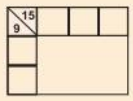
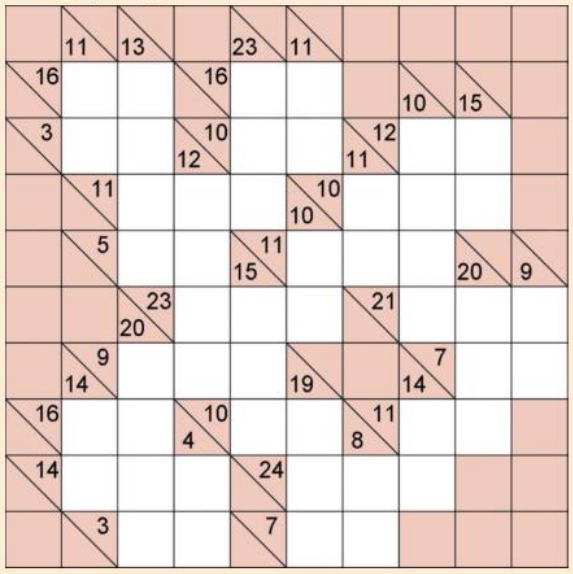
@BangaloreMirror

Kakuro

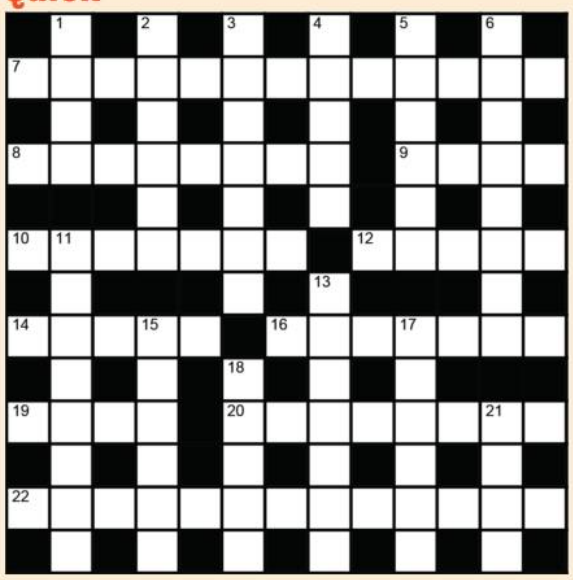
The numbers in the grey squares refer to the sums of the digits that you must fill into the empty spaces directly below or to the right of the grey square containing the number. For instance, in the given example, the 3 boxes horizontally next to 15 must contain 3 digits that add up to 15, whereas for 9, it is the 2 boxes placed vertically under it that must add up to 9. No zeros are used here, only the digits 1 through 9.



Note: A digit cannot appear more than once in any particular digit combination. For instance, in the example, we cannot have the combination of 4+7+4 for 15.



Quick



ACROSS

7 Known to be true on one's own testimony (4-9)
8 Ancestry (8)
9 Depose (4)
10 To send away (7)
12 Ward off (5)
14 Short moral story (5)
16 Japanese flower arranging (7)
19 Her basilica is located in Shivajinagar (4)
20 Improved pr bettered (8)
22 Four-sided polygon with two pairs of parallel sides (13)

DOWN

1 Very dry (4)
2 Attest (6)
3 Sightseer (7)
4 Make a bid? (5)
5 Accompany (6)
6 Exacts revenge (4,4)
11 Capital of Arunachal Pradesh (8)
13 Hawaiian guitar (7)
15 Inexpert non-professional (6)
17 Confuses or obscures (6)
18 Subdue or quash (5)
21 And others, in Latin (2,2)

Quoteuncode

This puzzle is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that Q equals C, it will equal C throughout the puzzle. Single letters, short words and words using an apostrophe give you clues to locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.

Today's CLUE: K EQUALS T

KYL TVWWLHLBXL ZLKQLLB WVXKVNB DBT HLDMVKS? WVXKVNB YDF KN ADOL FLBFL.

Linemaro

Ever since I met you, you've been living in my heart without paying rent

Mindchow

A good time to keep your mouth shut is when you're in deep water

Joke of the day

Leave note: Please excuse Jennifer for missing school yesterday. We forgot to get the Sunday paper off the porch, and when we found it Monday we thought it was Sunday

Loop

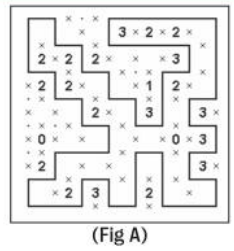
Rules

» Connect adjacent dots with vertical or horizontal lines, creating a single loop (Fig A). » Crossovers or branches are not allowed (As shown by dotted lines in Fig B). » Numbers in the puzzle indicate the number of lines that should surround it, while empty cells may be surrounded by any number of lines. » You can't draw lines around zeros. » Each puzzle has just one unique solution.

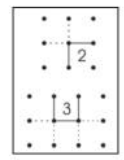
How to begin:

Example (Fig A) – Begin with the zero next to 3. Since no lines can be drawn around zero, mark crosses around it, as shown. Now there is a cross in one space around 3. So we know the three lines of 3 can only be drawn in the remaining three spaces. Next, these lines can only be extended in one direction each. Continue, using the same logic.

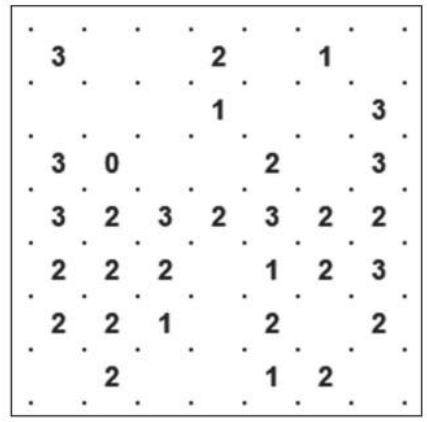
Hints: Keep eliminating possibilities by marking crosses in spaces between dots where a line isn't possible, i.e., if you have already completed required lines or where a line extension may create a branch or cause a dead-end (Fig B)



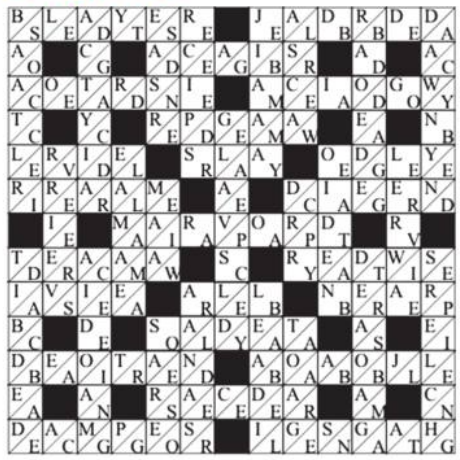
(Fig A)



(Fig B) Not Allowed



Strikeout



This crossword has no clues and the answer is there waiting for you. All you have to do is find it in each square. You have a choice of two letters, one of which you must strike out. If you choose correctly, you will be left with a grid that contains real words.

Fast five

How long do you think it will take you to unscramble the ten words shown below and fit them correctly into the grid in the order given one letter has already been entered to get you started? on your marks, get set...

1	2 C	3	4	5
6				
7				
8				
9				

ACROSS

1 Copse; 6 Or lah; 7 Eery I; 8 In gap; 9 Yurts

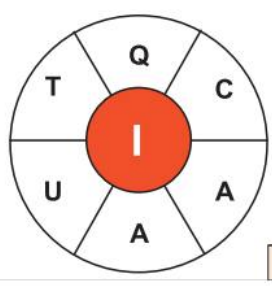
DOWN

1 Hears; 2 Coy up; 3 Or sir; 4 Inapt; 5 Ley eg.

Mensapuzzle

Which domino replaces the question mark to complete the puzzle?

Bull's eye



How many words of four or more letters can you make from the letters shown? Every word must contain the central letter. There should be one seven-letter word. British English Dictionary is used as a reference.

01 Average; **02** Good; **03** Outstanding

SudokuChallenge

	6	3				2	9	
			8	4	6			
	4		9		2		1	
	1		2		7		4	
		6				9		
	8		1		9		7	
	5		4		3		2	
			5	2	8			
	7	4				5	3	

To solve a Sudoku puzzle, every digit from one to nine must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows and in each of the nine boxes.

Gofigure

Place the four numbers in the first, third, fifth, and seventh boxes and whatever operators you care to use in the second, fourth, and sixth boxes in the correct order to get the answer. Use the numbers only once.

Easy = 22

4 5 6 7

Medium = 32

2 3 8 9

Hard = 8

2 4 8 3

Hocusfocus

Find at least six differences in details between panels.

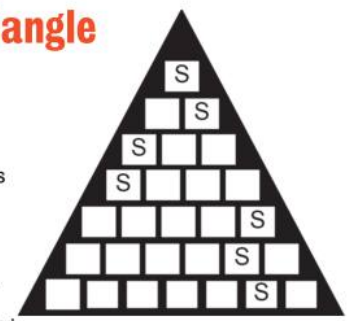
Differences: 1. Man is thinner. 2. Pants are longer. 3. Bush is moved. 4. Collar is different. 5. Hand is moved. 6. Finger is moved.

Riddler

The following 15 words can be divided into 5 groups of 3 words. The words in each trio will share a similar characteristic. What are the groupings? Why? astern, bony, con, deal, land, lien, nit, pending, pinion, range, slander, steroid, tile, vary, venue

Alpha triangle

1 Curved letter
2 Less more
3 Convene
4 Web page
5 Fork parts
6 Buy some shares
7 Most conceited

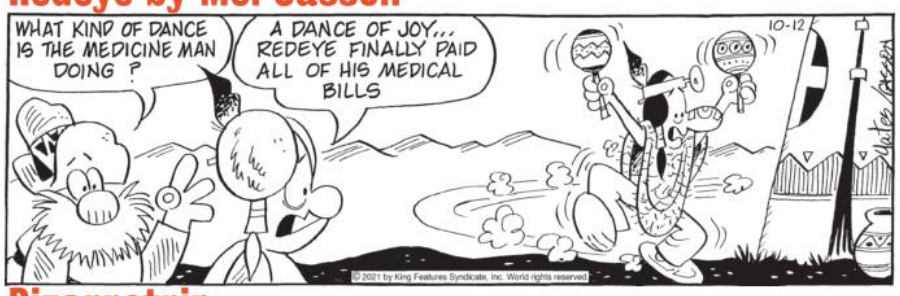


Beginning at the top move towards the bottom seven-letter word by adding a letter at each step and rearranging. A correct and different word must be made at each step answering to the clue given.

DIFFICULT TO SOLVE? FIND THESE SOLUTIONS ON THE NEXT PAGE

COMICS

Redeye by Mel Casson


WHAT KIND OF DANCE IS THE MEDICINE MAN DOING ?
A DANCE OF JOY... REDEYE FINALLY PAID ALL OF HIS MEDICAL BILLS
10-12
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Bizarrotrip

When I place this magic device on your nose, your words will sound wiser.
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Wayno & Piraro 10-22-21
Dist. by King Features

Diamond Lil

Hart of the city

20
YES!
BLORP
HEART PULLS OUT A BAG OF 100 GOLD COINS FROM THE PORTAL!
LOOK AT THAT!
SEE? YOU ALL NEED TO START TAKING MORE RISKS.
HEART OF THE CITY © 2021 ANDREWS MCMEEL SYNDICATION
@COMICS.COM/HEARTOFTHECITY

Crankshaft

RALPH IS BACK IN THE HOSPITAL AGAIN!
HE APPARENTLY STRAINED HIMSELF MOVING SOME HEAVY STUFF DURING THE COVID LOCKDOWN...
SO HE'S HAVING HIS HIATUS HERNIA WORKED ON.
BATIUK & DAVIS
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Mutts

WHAT YOUR STARS SAY TODAY

Aries Mar 21 – Apr 20
Today, your plans will not work on the professional front which will make you arrogant. You should try to avoid making important decisions in terms of investments and relationships. Couples and lovebirds should try to avoid making arguments to maintain harmony in the relationships. Students should not choose shortcuts in their studies.

Taurus Apr 21 – May 20
Today, the moon will make you more sensitive and emotional. You should avoid investing in real estate or other assets. You should take care of your parent's health. You should expect some delay in your work also; you should face it with patience. On the professional front, you should not be indecisive.

Gemini May 21 – Jun 21
Today you will be glad; you will be able to maintain a balance between your earnings and expenditures which will boost your finances. Your network will help you to implement your plans. Your siblings and subordinate staff will be more helpful today. You may plan to visit elders or some religious place.

Cancer Jun 22 – July 23
Today, your energy level will be high. So, it will make you happy and optimistic to fulfil your desires with the help of hard work. You will plan to go for outings with friends and family to share your happiness. Students will have good news in terms of studies.

Leo Jul 24 – Aug 23
Today, until late afternoon will not be good; you may feel unhappy and become nervous, but afternoon onwards, you will be more happy and internal vitality will boost your self-confidence. You should avoid carelessness in making decisions in terms of finance, profession and studies. Sometimes, you may face self-respect issues with the spouse; need to keep patience to avoid converting happy moments into bad moments. Lovebirds may plan for short trips.

Virgo Aug 24 – Sep 23
Today, your tendency to overspend will affect your savings. You should be careful while expressing yourself in work and on the domestic front also. You should avoid lending money. You should postpone making important decisions in real estate and other assets. You should try to avoid a tendency of elevation from your responsibilities.

Libra Sep 24 – Oct 22
Today, social get-togethers may help you re-establish your network which will make give you benefits in the near future. Natives related to glamour, art, fashion will plan to do something new in terms of their profession. Students will perform better today in terms of studies. Lovebirds may enjoy their happy moments.

Scorpio Oct 23 – Nov 22
Today will be a busy day for you in terms of work; overload may make you tired but you will enjoy your work. You should not spend money on worthless stuff. You should be more polite with your family, friends and loved ones. You may also get some good news from family members.

Sagittarius Nov 23 – Dec 22
Today, blessings from elders will give you confidence. You should follow your intuition before taking any initiatives which will help you in your work. Your intuition will help to gain more in terms of finance. You will plan to visit some religious place with your family members. You should control your arrogance to enjoy your domestic life. Students will expect good results with the help of destiny.

Capricorn Dec 23 – Jan 20
Today, before forenoon, you may feel happy and enjoy your work, afternoon onwards, a negative feeling will make you dull which will affect your professional life; you can expect some domestic arguments also. You should avoid lending money to anyone, it might be not recoverable easily. You shall analyse yourself and figure out your negativities. Occult sciences will attract you today in terms of study.

Aquarius Jan 21 – Feb 19
Today, you will be blessed by the moon. You will be in a very good mood since morning. You will be more romantic also; it will fill harmony in your domestic life. Your patience will help you to do your best professionally. You will see some coordination with your colleagues and business partner.

Pisces Feb 20 – Mar 20
You will be successful in controlling leakage and worthless expenditures, which will boost your bank balance. You should be careful with your kids' health. Singles can have unexpected progress in terms of marriage. People related to travel, diplomats, supply chain will do better. You should be careful about stomach issues.

KIDZONE

Deeksha Krithi J.H, 10 years, MLA School

Kushi T. Gowda, 10 years, MLA School

Kidzone, Bangalore Mirror, No.4, KSCCF Compound, Pampa Maha Kavi Road, Chamrajpet, Bengaluru 560 018; Please send hard copies of your artwork in A4 size only.

SOLUTIONS

MENSA PUZZLE 5. Taking pairs of domnoes, one from the extreme left of the row and one from the extreme right of the row, both show the same point total. Repeat this sequence, working towards the centre.

SOLVE IN 1M = 14÷¾(⅝)÷6 = 7(1) × 6 = 42

BULL'S EYE quit, acquit, AQUATIC,

QUOTE UNCODE The difference between fiction and reality? Fiction has to make sense.

FAST FIVE

S	C	O	P	E
H	O	R	A	L
E	Y	R	I	E
A	P	I	N	G
R	U	S	T	Y

STRIKE OUT

D	A	G	G	E	R		L	E	N	G	T	H		

QUICK

S		A		T		O		E		G				

RIDDLER Each word can be prefixed with a vowel. Each grouping can be prefixed with the same vowel. a) llen (alien), sterold (asteroid), venue (avenue), e) astern (eastern), bony (ebony), land (eland), i) con (icon), deal (ideal), slander (islander), o) pinion (opinion), range (orange), vary (ovary), u) nit (unit), pending (upending), tile (utile)

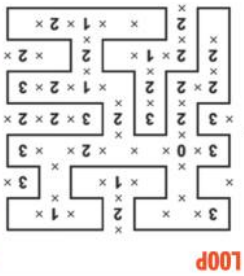
SUDOKU

8	6	3	7	1	5	2	9	4
1	9	2	8	4	6	7	5	3
5	4	7	9	3	2	8	1	6
3	1	9	2	8	7	6	4	5
7	2	6	3	5	4	9	8	1
4	8	5	6	9	1	3	7	2
6	5	8	4	7	3	1	2	9
9	3	1	5	2	8	4	6	7
2	7	4	1	6	9	5	3	8

ALPHA TRIANGLE
S, Is, Sit, Site, Tines, Invest, Vainest.

GO FIGURE
Easy
4 + 7 + 5 + 6=22
Medium
9 – 2 – 3 x 8=32
Hard
8 + 4 / 3 x 2 = 8

LOOP



KAKURO

Volume No 15, Issue No 29 RNI NO:KARENG/2007/22411 Published for the Proprietors, Metropolitan Media Company Ltd by R.J. Prakashan at No.4, KSCCF Compound, Pampa Maha Kavi Road, Chamrajpet, Bengaluru 560 018 and printed by him at Fourth Estate Ltd, No. 9/10/11-A, 4th Main, Bommasandra Industrial Area, Hosur Road, Bengaluru 560099 (Phones : Press : 080-22899999; Editorial : 080-40877666, Fax – 40877545, Registered Office: No.4, KSCCF Compound, Pampa Maha Kavi Road, Chamarajpet, Bengaluru 560 018. Email : mybangaloremirror@timesgroup.com Editor : Ms. Seena Menon – responsible for selection of news under PRB Act. © Reproduction in whole or in part without the written permission of the Publisher is prohibited.

Movies

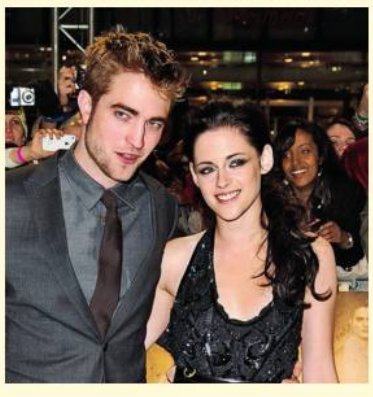
YOU'VE GOT TO HIDE YOUR LOVE AWAY

Actors who faced restrictions on dating while working together

Co-stars being linked to each other to generate hype around a film is not something that comes as a surprise, but have you heard about co-stars being warned to stay away from each other? After Brahmastra director Ayan Mukerji revealed he is the reason why Ranbir Kapoor and Alia Bhatt have put their personal lives on hold, **ETimes** did a little digging and, they aren't the only ones to face restrictions on dating while working together. Read on to know more...

Tom Holland and Zendaya

'Spider-Man: No Way Home' co-stars Tom Holland and Zendaya's instant chemistry on the sets left producer Amy Pascal concerned that her lead actors would start a real-life romance, so she advised them not to date each other. Producer Amy Pascal revealed that she advised Tom and Zendaya against getting into a romantic relationship with each other after they were cast as Peter and MJ. "Don't go there - just don't. Try not to," Pascal recalled telling them.



Robert Pattinson and Kristen Stewart

Robert Pattinson and Kristen Stewart had fans around the world rooting for their romance that sparked off on the sets of the teen drama 'Twilight'. It was revealed that sparks flew between the couple while they were auditioning for the roles. Director Catherine Hardwicke opened up about how she warned Pattinson against dating Stewart right after their first audition together. However, she just warned him as Stewart was still under 18 years at the time. The two love-struck co-stars reportedly began dating around the time that the first Twilight film was released. They were together for several years, before calling it quits.

Alia Bhatt and Ranbir Kapoor

'Brahmastra' director Ayan Mukerji revealed he was the one who stopped Alia and Ranbir from going public with their romance. The director said he cast the two because 'it was just too good'. Ayan said, "I didn't want the world to see them for these four years. I didn't want anyone to see them till my film had come out. So, lots of things haven't happened in their lives because each time they went out together, I would be sitting at the back saying 'you all are ruining my film. Please don't go anywhere.'"

Sara Ali Khan and Sushant Singh Rajput

Sara Ali Khan's alleged romance with Sushant Singh Rajput became public long after their split. But, did you know it was Kareena Kapoor Khan who first raised eyebrows with her fiery statement? The actress, who was a guest on a chat show, was asked by bestie Amrita Arora, what dating advice she would give Sara. To this, Kareena promptly replied, "Don't date your first hero!"

When host Komal laughed at her remark, Kareena insisted, "I have said (it)." Sara made her Bollywood debut with 2018's 'Kedarnath', which had the late actor as the male lead. According to reports, the two were in fact in a low-key relationship and managed to sneak out under the radar.

Andrew Garfield & Emma Stone

Tom and Zendaya weren't the only 'Spider-Man' co-stars who dated in real life. Andrew Garfield and Emma Stone were among the most loved couples in Hollywood after they starred together in 'The Amazing Spider-Man' films. While Garfield played the superhero, stone played his love interest, Gwen Stacy. The two co-stars were also warned about dating each other by their producer Amy Pascal. In her interview, she said, "I gave the same advice to Andrew and Emma. It can just complicate things, you know? And they all ignored me."

Andrew and Emma dated for four years until they called it quits in 2015, a year after 'The Amazing Spider-Man 2' hit theatres.

TOP HEALTH QUERY THIS WEEK

Why can't I lose weight?

ANSWERED BY MFINE'S GENERAL PHYSICIAN

Onset of Prediabetes
Underactive thyroid gland
Following fad diets
Lack of adequate sleep

Scan QR code to join Weight Loss Plan at ₹2022

mfine

Veteran director KV Raju no more

Veteran Kannada director, writer KV Raju passed away on Friday at his home in Bengaluru. Raju has directed the Amitabh Bachchan-starrer 'Indrajeet' and directed Kajol and Jitendra in 'Udhar Ki Zindagi'. Raju has directed super hit Kannada movies 'Yudhakanda', 'Belli Modagalu', 'Indrajith', 'Kadana', 'Belli Kalungara' and critically acclaimed 'Hulia' movie. He had also recently worked as a screenplay and dialogue writer for the yet to be released 'Satyam'. Raju entered the film industry in 1982 as an associate director to KV Jayaram in his movie, 'Baadada Hoo'. Raju made his debut as a director and writer with the movie 'Olave Baduku' in 1984. Raju became a sensation in the Kannada film industry by giving blockbusters in the 80s and 90s. He worked with most of the Kannada superstars. He ventured into Hindi film industry with his film 'Indrajeeth'. He also directed two other Hindi films, 'Udhar Ki Zindagi' (1994) and 'Khooni Jung' (2004). He is recognised for his powerful, realistic dialogues and sharp editing. He also gave opportunities to actors Devraj, Jaggesh and Shashikumar. —IANS

Shahid's 1st impression on pa-in-law

Bollywood actor Shahid Kapoor made a shocking revelation about meeting his father-in-law for the first time during his appearance on the television comedy show.

The actor, who is promoting his upcoming film 'Jersey', said his wife Mira Rajput's father was unimpressed when he first met his future son-in-law. Shahid says: "I coloured my hair at that time because in the film ('Udta Punjab'), my character was shown to be a little different. Mira's father wears formal shirts and pants and he has a very neat hairstyle, shaves every morning." He continues: "When he saw me for the first time, the look on his face echoed thoughts like, 'who is my daughter marrying!?' 'What kind of a boy is he?' So, now when I go to meet him, I comb my hair properly and his eyes light up with joy."